

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council
May 8th, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The DEI Council advances diversity, equity, and inclusion and addresses the problems of bias, systemic inequities and underrepresentation in the legal profession and legal system.

Attendance

Member Attendees: Gov. Tom Ahearne, Raina Wagner, Noelle Chung, Lilli Douglas, Sharon Sakamoto, Mike Rhodes, Gov. Nam Nguyen, Christopher Swaby, Hon. Andrea Jarmon, SaNni Lemonidis, Maria Little, Miryam Gordon

WSBA Staff: Diana Singleton, Saleena Salango

Guests: Renata Garcia (WSBA Chief Regulatory Council)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:21 P.M.

April Meeting Minutes

SaNni Lemonidis moved to amend the April minutes to indicate that the DEI Council approved the March meeting minutes. Raina Wagner moved to approve, seconded by Sharon Sakamoto for the April meeting minutes with an amendment that states that the Council approved the March minutes. The DEI Council voted unanimously to approve the April meeting minutes.

Board of Governors Update

Gov. Nam Nguyen shared an update about the last Board of Governors meeting.

Gov. Francis Adewale was voted to be the President Elect for 2024-2025, and President for 2025-2026. The Board appointed a new member. Gov. Sunitha Anjilvel has stepped into a role as acting president of the WSBA, given that Pres. Hunter Abell has taken a leave of absence.

The Board also heard a presentation from the LLLT Board and from the Oregon State Bar about alternate pathways to licensure and non-attorney licenses; a public engagement plan; and succession planning for when Executive Director Terra Nevitt's appointment ends in 2030.

The next Board meeting will be [July 18-19 in Nespelem and Moses Lake, WA.](#)

DEI Council Co-Chair for FY25

Raina Wagner reminded the Council to re-apply for appointment by May 31st. Any DEI Council member may apply to be a co-chair for the Council and Raina welcomed members to consider stepping into this leadership role. The co-chair will be appointed by the WSBA President. If you would like to be a co-chair for the DEI Council, please contact the staff liaisons. The President may appoint a co-chair that is not a BOG or returning Council member to serve for one year, which will temporarily increase membership size to 19.

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New Member Recruitment and Selection

We anticipate 3 openings for the Council beginning 10/2025. We have one open seat on the Council, and Lilli Douglas and Christopher Swaby will be rolling off. We have 3 members whose first terms are expiring but will be applying for re-appointment.

Staff liaisons will send information about deadlines, application instructions, and other information about how to apply to help assist with outreach; we asked members to invite 2-3 individuals to apply for appointment on the Council.

DEI Council and LLLT Program

Miryam Gordon reported that Sunitha Anjilvel met with Steve Crossland, the chair of the LLLT Board, about how the DEI Council and LLLT Program can connect with each other. The LLLT Board is doing outreach to expand partnerships to many different groups, including the Practice of Law Board and the Access To Justice Board. The LLLT Board does not have a clear agenda or plans to bring the LLLT license back. Currently, more data is needed to understand the impact of the LLLT program on access to justice and lessons learned about it.

Raina Wagner also identified that we should consider the DEI Council capacity and current projects in determining our role in partnering with the LLLT Board for any efforts. Sharon Sakamoto shared concerns that this issue will be forgotten and proposed we keep this issue or something related to Access To Justice on the agenda.

Miryam Gordon offered to clarify her role and experiences as a LLLT if DEI Council members would like to learn more. Renata Garcia proposed that the DEI Council identify a liaison to attend LLLT Board meetings to remain in the loop, and offered to share the presentation to the Board at the last meeting. The primary reason for discontinuing the program was the cost and the court rules that state Practice of Law Board developed licenses need to be self-sustaining within a reasonable amount of time.

Gov. Tom Ahearne encouraged the Board to consider whether the LLLT Program advances DEI, how it does so, and decide how the DEI Council will help promote the LLLT Program if it does.

DEI Council MBA Buddy System

Raina Wagner reminded the Council of ongoing conversations about building relationships with MBAs. We encourage members to sign up to be a “buddy” to MBAs. We will return to the discussion about the expectations during a future meeting.

Workgroup Updates

Membership Demographic Study – Nam Nguyen shared that the researchers are still trying to get participants for focus groups.

Pathways into the Profession – Noelle Chung shared that the Pathways planning group has started to delegate work to make the Summit a reality: program planning, in-person event logistics, fundraising/partnerships, and outreach/communications. Dallas, Noelle, and Saleena will work to organize and consolidate various working materials to support collaboration.

DEI Plan – Miryam Gordon shared that the Institute for Inclusion in the LEgal Profession is pulling together an assessment of attitudes, opportunities, and barriers for the WSBA’s board and volunteer

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entities to advance DEI. **We urge all DEI Council members to review this assessment in detail for our Council retreat when IILP sends it in early June.**

Roundtable Discussion and/or Announcements

Upcoming MBA Meetings – We have funding to send DEI Council members to MBA events; please email Diana and Saleena for more information. July 9th, 2024 will be a Board-MBA Leaders social event at the Wing Luke Museum; stay tuned for more information.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:32 P.M.